

Growing Personal Care Services So More People Can Live Safely at Home

An interview with Jim Rolla, SVP, Personal Care—who, in addition to overseeing more than 6,150 home health aides (HHAs), spearheads the Personal Care team's plans for growth.

Personal Care census has been growing. What's fueling that growth?

One key thing helping us to grow is that [we've expanded the network of Medicaid Managed Long Term Care \(MLTC\) health plans](#) we're working with—since MLTC plan members make up the bulk of clients cared for by our home health aides. We're currently contracted with more external health plans than ever before, including three large MLTC plans that we recently signed contracts with. These contracts allow the plans to refer members to VNS Health to get [personal care services from our HHAs](#).

You've also expanded your own sales force, haven't you?

Yes. We recently created a dedicated sales team that operates in the community, reaching out to neighborhood residents who qualify for Medicaid and educating them on the important benefits of personal care services, including how these services will allow them to live safely at home as they get older. We

then go on to explain how they can get these services by enrolling in an MLTC plan. These individuals can choose to enroll in any MLTC plan offered in their area, of course—but if they decide to enroll in an MLTC that we're contracted with, they're likely to select us as their personal care provider, since they already know us. Over the past year, we've increased our client census by about 10% through this approach.

How about our own health plans? Do they have a role in Personal Care's growth?

Certainly. We supply HHAs to members of VNS Health's MLTC plan and our integrated Medicare-Medicaid plan, VNS Health Total. Growing these plans is a priority for us—and as these plans get larger, we stand to get more referrals from them to provide HHA services to their members.

In order to grow, you also need enough HHAs to service your growing volume, don't you?

That's true—and we're doing well in that respect. Our one-year retention rate for newly hired HHAs is currently over 85%. Our bonus incentive program, [VNS Health Rewards](#), has played a big part in that. If an HHA hits certain benchmarks, they get a bonus added to their weekly paycheck. This culture of recognition has been a game changer as far as retaining staff. We've also collaborated with the 1199 union to negotiate a contract that's truly in the best interest of our HHAs. It includes an hourly rate that's above the minimum home care worker wage as well as excellent benefits.

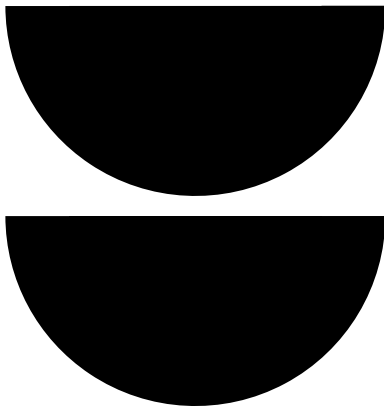
Do these factors also help in recruiting?

Absolutely. A good compensation and incentive structure obviously helps attract new hires. Plus, most of our new HHAs come through referrals by our own team members. If our aides feel good about their work, they're more likely to refer friends and family to us. That said, however, the best way to grow our workforce is by acquiring other home health aide businesses. We're currently looking at several possible acquisitions, so stay tuned for additional developments on this front.

Our personal care services can help you manage your loved one's everyday tasks like cooking, dressing, bathing, and more.

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Summer 2024 Issue

Author

VNS Health TODAY

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